

first to fourth optical matrix switches, wherein a plurality of 2-input/2-output optical switch elements are arranged in a matrix to form a plurality of input ports, a plurality of auxiliary input ports, a plurality of output ports, and a plurality of auxiliary output ports, said auxiliary output ports in the first optical matrix switch being respectively connected to said input ports in the third optical matrix switch, said output ports in the second optical matrix switch being respectively connected to said auxiliary input ports in the third optical matrix switch, said output ports in the first optical matrix switch being respectively connected to said auxiliary input ports in the fourth optical matrix switch, said auxiliary output ports in the second optical matrix switch being respectively connected to said input ports in the fourth optical matrix switch, said input ports in said optical switches being connected to a plurality of output ports in said optical demultiplexing units; and said output ports in said optical switches being connected to a plurality of input ports in said optical multiplexing units.

add 9. (NEW) An optical switch to receive and output at least sixteen signals, comprising:

four nxn optical matrix switches, each having at least sixteen 2-input/2-output optical switch elements arranged in a matrix and providing that two of the four optical matrix switches receive at least sixteen input signals, the four nxn optical matrix switches being connected to form four input ports, four auxiliary input ports, four output ports, and four auxiliary output ports such that each of the sixteen optical signals received passes through no more than two of the four nxn optical matrix switches to provide one of sixteen output signals output by the other two of the four optical matrix switches.

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 8-9 have been added. Claims 1-9 are pending and under consideration.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-2 and 5-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being anticipated over Applicant's Admission of Prior Art (AAPA) in view of Kashima (US 6,317,529). This rejection is respectfully traversed for the reasons stated below.